

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 /013 W
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R 111647Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3834

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FOLNG SENT NEW DELHI FROM CALCUTTA DATED 11 SEPT.

QUOTE: CALCUTTA 1897

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: CASC, PFOR, IN

SUBJ: HARCOS/FLETCHER

1. CONSUL O'NEILL VISITED HARCOS AND FLETCHER TODAY. BOTH ARE IN GOOD MORALE WITH WEIGHT AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED (CALCUTTA 1876). BOTH APPEAR TIRED WHICH IS UNDERSTANDABLE CONSIDERING THE LENGTH OF THE HUNGER STRIKE.

2 FLETCHER ADVISED O'NEILL DURING VISIT THAT PREVIOUS INFORMATION REGARDING TERMINATION OF HUNGER STRIKE WAS INCOMPLETE. FLETCHER, WITH HARCOS NODDING AGREEMENT, SAID THEY WOULD NOT RPT NOT LEAVE PRESIDENCY JAIL AND GO INTO QUARTERS OUTSIDE UNTIL THEY HAD ASSURANCES OF AN OPEN TRIAL OR CONSULAR ACCESS. WHEN O'NEILL REMONSTRATED THAT THIS WAS NOT WHAT THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY TOLD HIM, FLETCHER SAID "WE WERE STRINGING YOU ALONG IN ORDER TO GET THINGS GOING". WHEN QUERIED, THEY ADVISED THEY HAD NOT INFORMED THEIR LAWYERS ON THIS NEW WRINKLE.

3. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THIS MEETING WHICH LASTED APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES, SENIOR JAIL WARDEN REQUESTED DISCUSSION O'NEILL ABOUT EFFECTS OF "ALMOST THREE MONTHS OF NASAL FEEDING OF MR. HARCOS AND MR. FLETCHER." HE EXPRESSED SERIOUS CONCERN AT WHAT THIS STRIKE WAS DOING TO THE PRISONERS' HEALTH. HE

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EMPHASIZED THAT HARCOS AND FLETCHER WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO

SECURE THEIR DEMANDS BY MEANS OF A HUNGER STRIKE. THIS CONVERSATION LASTED 25 MINUTES WITH A DETAILED EXPLANATION OF INDIAN LAW AND SPECIFICALLY THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT. O'NEILL REPLIED BXUSTATING THAT THESE MATTERS WERE NOT WITHIN HIS COMPETENCE AND WERE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN NEW DELHI AND THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

4. COMMENT: O'NEILL FEELS THAT BOTH HARCOS AND FLETCHER WILL NOT RPT NOT GIVE UP HUNGER STRIKE UNTIL THEY HAVE BEEN ASSURED OF OPEN TRIAL OR CONSULAR ACCESS IN ADDITION TO BAIL.
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